

10 Tips for Creating a Welcoming Environment & Engaging Young Adults in Faith Formation

1. **Be who you are**—The body of Christ is made up of many parts. Be who you are and grow into who God is calling you to be. Don't try to be who you think young adults want you to be.
2. **Ask "Why?"**—Instead of asking how to get young adults into the church, a deeper question is "Why do we want young adults?" If preserving church structures is the primary motivation for engaging young adults, creating a welcoming environment could be difficult. Building relationships and coming alongside young adults open to the Spirit's movement is a more effective starting point.
3. **Communicate the meaning**—Understanding a faith community's mission helps young adults connect. Young adults are more likely to engage in activities that have meaning and relevance to their lives and that help envision the world as a better place.
4. **Highlight opportunities for service (faith in action)**—Many young adults want to put their faith in action and engage in the transformation of the world. Inviting young adults to a service project can be a comfortable way for them to engage with a faith community.
5. **Build community by meeting young adults where they are**—Young adults crave community, connection, mentoring, and space to explore the realities and transitions they are facing. The church has an opportunity to build community through mission, worship, and fellowship that recognize where young adults are spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
6. **Embrace our diverse society**—We live in a pluralistic and diverse society. Recognizing and celebrating religious diversity helps young adults learn from other faith traditions as well as understand the Christian tradition more deeply. Many young adults are passionate about full inclusion of our diverse society, including gender equality, racial justice, and immigration reform.

7. **Nurture dynamic leadership**—Young adults may not want or be able to commit to a term on session or a standing committee. However, they may be more interested and able to lead specific projects (e.g., building a Habitat for Humanity house, starting an urban garden, serving as liturgist for a Sunday) that allow them to use their spiritual gifts and collaborate with others.
8. **Ponder the big questions, but don't forget the "basics"**—Young adults don't want to be forced to accept certain beliefs in order to enter a faith community. Cultivate opportunities to ponder the big questions we all face (e.g., who are we, what is death), but also be aware many young adults need opportunities to learn the basics of faith (e.g., Bible 101).
9. **Think holistically**—Consider different learning styles, the pursuit of work/life balance, and the realities of the young adults in your community when thinking about mission, faith formation, and worship. Young adults in your community may have issues that you don't realize (e.g., a lack of accessible transportation) until you form relationships with them.
10. **You don't have to reinvent the wheel when ministering to young adults**—There are people walking alongside you on this journey. Reach out to other churches, the presbytery, the synod, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency when you need help.